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THE ROSE-BUSH OF A THOUSAND YEARS

Joline thanked God that her eyes had seen and her hands had touched the Rose-bush of a Thousand Years.

Frontispiece

THE ROSE-BUSH OF A THOUSAND YEARS

BY

MABEL WAGNALLS

AUTHOR OF "MISERERE," (TRANSLATIONS PUBLISHED IN GERMANY AND POLAND), "THE PALACE OF DANGER" (TRANSLATIONS PUBLISHED SERIALLY AND IN BOOK-FORM IN GERMANY AND SWEDEN), "KARINA DONIMIRSKA" (TRANSLATION PUBLISHED IN GERMANY), "STARS OF THE OPERA," "SELMA THE SOPRANO," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED

WITH EIGHT FULL PAGE REPRODUCTIONS FROM THE MOTION-PICTURE DRAMA

REVELATION

FEATURING

MADAME NAZIMOVA

Sixth Edition

FUNK & WAGNALLS COMPANY

NEW YORK AND LONDON

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United States, August 11, 1910

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

THE Story in Part I of this book has a somewhat unusual history. It first appeared in "Snappy Stories," having found its way into that magazine through an agent. It was published within three weeks of its acceptance in the second October number, 1916. So original was the theme of the story, that the editor of "Current Opinion" requested permission to republish it in his magazine, where it appeared the following December. It was promptly included and double-starred in E. J. O'Brien's book, "Best Short Stories of 1916." The author at once began receiving requests for the motion picture rights and by January 1, 1917, these were sold—all happening within three months.

Not the least unusual part of the history is the way it came into the hands

of its eventual purchaser, a young lawyer—a stranger—having no connection with literary agencies or motion picture firms. He picked up haphazard a copy of "Current Opinion" to read on the train. The title of the story attracted him; he read it and was so impressed with its dramatic possibilities that on his arrival in New York he decided to take a risk. Going straight to the telephone, he called up the author and offered her a cash sum for the rights. He won out against four firms who had been in the field before him and, as events proved, had no reason to regret it. He resold the screen rights to the Metro Picture Company who bought it for their star Madame Nazimova. With comparatively few changes, it was adapted into the now famous photoplay, *REVELATION,* a play that has called forth unanimous and unusual commendation from the critics; papers that seldom give notice to the film world having gone out of their way to praise it. "Life"

calls it "an unusual demonstration of the legitimate dramatic possibilities of the moving picture"; while the sedate "Journal of Commerce" proclaims it "a truly great picture."

Thanks are due the Metro Company for permission to reproduce for illustration some of the scenes from the play, showing Madame Nazimova in her remarkable characterization of Joline.

The cover design is taken from an actual photograph of the historic thousand-year-old Rose-Bush in the monastery garden of Hildesheim.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

It was during my student days in Europe that I chanced upon the ancient Rose-Bush of Hildesheim. So remote, so other-worldly was the picture of peace it presented in its dreamy setting among lowly graves in the cloistered garden of the monastery that it left an unforgetable vision among my girlhood's fancies. The memory of that strangely tranquil spot nested in a world of human struggle abided with me hauntingly and long afterward shaped itself into the following story. If by any chance I have succeeded in imparting to others a slight sense of the trance-like, tender joy that garden gave to me, I shall feel greatly gratified.

M. W.

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Part One

THE STORY

Part I

THE STORY

JOLINE had been posing as a Bacchante. The sitting was over, and she had changed from her costume befitting the woods of Arcady to one designed for the Bois de Boulogne.

Joline was petite and brunette. Nature had done much for her, and the beauty-shops of Rue de la Paix had done more. Her pink finger-nails vied in luster with the dozen or more diamonds that weighted her hands. She was daintily powdered and penciled and painted and perfumed. Her lips were seductively reddened. Hers were in more senses than one "the bought red mouth" of Ernest Dawson's muse, though the ruddy lips he had in mind were probably nursing at their mother's breast at the time Joline was rouging hers. Joline

and the Jardin Mabille were contemporaries, and it was from this hothouse of deadly night-blooms that she had blossomed forth. Any guide-book of the early eighties will describe the notorious Jardin for you.

Granville had found her there, had been fascinated, and had transplanted her to his studio, where she was always introduced as his model; and in truth she served very creditably in that capacity. She was a good-hearted little creature — at least, so thought Granville. She would pose for him by the hour with the utmost patience. He never suspected that a furious jealousy prompted this amiability. The thought of any other woman holding his gaze, and perhaps eventually his heart-strings and purse-strings, was to Joline a perpetual terror.

Thus far she had reigned supreme; and she enjoyed life accordingly.

She was lolling now in a chaise-longue, toying with a wine-glass and

absently watching Granville cover his picture.

"The Bacchante is nearly finished; what comes next?" she asked idly.

"Something very different," was the non-committal reply.

"What is it?" she persisted, languidly reaching for a match to light a cigarette.

There was a pause; Granville busied himself with a cigarette of his own, and then flung himself onto a chair near the table at her side.

"Well, if you must know—it's a Madonna."

"A Madonna! Bless his heart—a Madonna!" She spoke mockingly and smiled witchingly. "What's the setting? Angels and cherubs and dear old Saint Joseph? Do you know, he's always been my ideal of a perfect gentleman!"

But Granville answered very seriously: "There will be no angels and no Joseph—only a bush by a roadside."

"A bush by a roadside! Where's the bush, and where's the roadside?" Joline

blew a wreath of smoke and swung her right foot as it hung over her left knee.

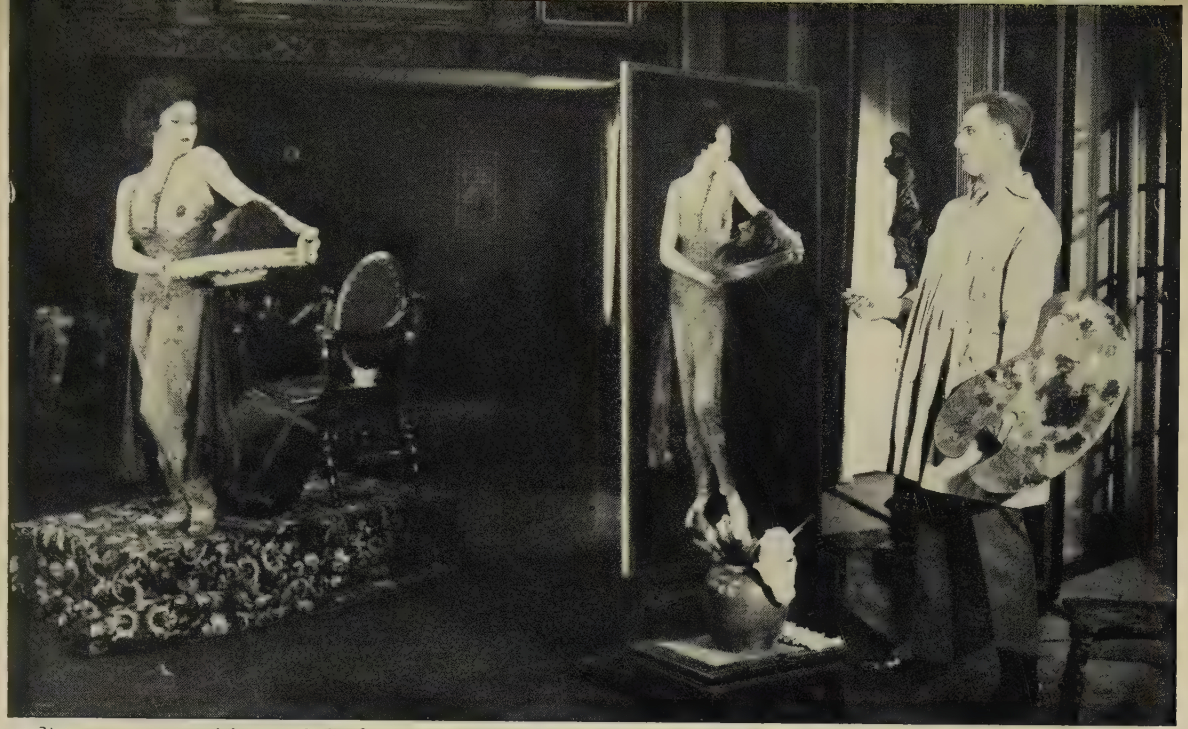
Granville became explicit and worked himself up to enthusiasm as he expatiated on his subject. "The roadside no longer exists, but the bush, marvelous to relate, is still there and thriving. I am thrilled whenever I think of it. That bush is a thousand years old, at least, so they say. That many years ago, according to the story, a weary monk rested under its shade and slept. When he awoke, the Holy Mother appeared to him, standing among the roses. Later a church was built around the rose-tree and is standing there to-day. I intend to paint the legend on the spot."

"Where's the spot?" persisted Joline.

"In Hildesheim, a tiny medieval town a hundred miles from here."

"Jolly! That means a journey. When do we go?"

"I am not sure that *we* go at all," he answered quietly, though with inward misgivings.



She was a good-hearted little creature,—at least so thought Granville. She would pose for him by the hour with the utmost patience.

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"But you will need a model."

"I shall not want you for that."

Joline sat upright, her eyes blazing "Why?"

Granville was so ungallant as to smile when he answered, "Simply because—it's a Madonna."

Joline was furious, but too wise to show it. She pouted with a playful injured air. "So you think I won't do for a Madonna!" Then she looked up at him, smiling her sauciest. "That's because you've never really seen me play the saint. I might try it suddenly and astonish you."

She blew a wreath of smoke into his eyes and then threw him a kiss. "You don't know me, *mon ami;* and you don't know so very much about the Virgin Mary, either. Take away her halo and her company of angels—she wouldn't look very different from other women. If I were always surrounded by a group of solemn saints instead of joyous sinners, you would find yourself making

the sign of the cross whenever we met!"

Granville smiled admiringly, but remained obdurate. "You won't do for my Madonna."

"I *will* do for your Madonna," she retorted sharply, but quickly guarded her tone. "Honestly, dearie, I can look as holy as a relic. I was once an angel in the apotheosis scene of 'Faust,' and they all said I was more rapt and hallelujah-looking than any in the crowd. You see, white draperies have such a lot to do with it. Any woman looks innocent in a white veil."

For two days she pouted and pleaded, then threatened and sulked. She worked herself into a temper, stamped her foot, flung things around, smashed some bric-à-brac, and came alarmingly near to slashing one of Granville's paintings.

In the end, of course, she had her way, and then became at once so adorably gentle and loving that Granville almost convinced himself that she did

look a bit celestial; enough so at least for his Madonna.

Three weeks later they located in Hildesheim's best hotel.

Granville went at once to the ancient monastery whose cloistered halls surrounded the little garden and graveyard where grew the famous bush. They showed him the peaceful enclosure: it filled him with inspiration. They also showed him a set of rules, which filled him with dismay, for one of these (in those days rigidly enforced) prohibited women visitors. Granville had set his heart on making at least one sketch with his Madonna standing among the branches of the genuine bush. This would give him the proper atmosphere, the needed inspiration and thrill. Of course the main work on the picture could be done at some wayside nook more resembling the setting of the legend.

The firm refusal to allow any woman inside of the gates greatly depressed

Granville, but when Joline heard of it she solved the difficulty in two minutes.

"Smuggle me in as a boy. Just take me along as your brother. We'll drive up in a carriage, and unless the gate-keeper is keener-eyed than any of the puffy old monks I have ever seen, he won't give me a second glance, so long as I wear trousers. Once in the garden, if the place is vacant, I can remove my coat and hustle those Madonna draperies about me in no time."

But could they count on being alone in the garden? Granville made inquiries and was assured that from twelve until three the monks were always in the refectory or chapel, and he would be undisturbed. Still he hesitated, but Joline was fearless and impulsive.

"Even if they discover us — what then? They can't *eat* us. It's Lent now, anyway—they eat only fish. Come on—don't be afraid."

He yielded to her urging, and every-

The gateman, a sleepy monk, gave but a languid nod to the brisk young chap who hurried through ahead of Granville. *See page 25*

thing worked beautifully so far as they were concerned. The gateman, a sleepy-eyed monk, gave but a languid nod to the brisk young chap who hurried through ahead of Granville.

Left to themselves in the sunny garden, Joline soon arrayed herself in the blue and white robes of Granville's Madonna. With her dark, well-waved hair loosened about her shoulders, and a proper simplicity of expression carefully assumed, she looked indeed very Virgin-like. Granville posed her alongside the famous bush, which was attached to the tower wall. One of her hands rested on a branch. There was some trouble in adjusting this part of the pose, but the artist finally hit upon the one particular angle that suited him.

"There where the chip is out of the wall—keep your hand on that spot —so."

Joline was a good model: she could hold a pose for an astonishing length of time. Granville worked rapidly; the

sketch progressed splendidly. He was delighted with the whole idea. Flecks of sunshine dotted her gown, the peace of the place seemed reflected in her face. Joline was beautiful, no mistake about that, and she stood so still that a bird came and sang on the bough she was touching. The bough was bare of bud and leaf; gray and gaunt with age.

Joline and the bird and the song were young, but everything else was old: the graves of the pious brothers sleeping in the shadow of the walls where they had lived, the cloistered corridors surrounding the little garden, the squat, square tower, and the rose-bush — they were century-old companions—they and the sunlight—centuries old. The peace and the stillness were so profound that Joline felt she must breathe very softly.

The time was nearly up, the sketch well-nigh completed, Joline after several rest-pauses was still divinely posing, when the unforeseen occurred.

It is seldom that anything unusual

occurs in a monastery: the rules are so rigid that one need only peruse them to know what every monk at a certain hour is doing. And so, true to the book, every monk was now in the refectory—every monk save one. He was Brother Augustine—very old and very sick. He was somewhat better to-day, but still lay on his cot in his cell, and was forbidden to get up or try to walk.

But Brother Augustine did get up and did walk. He had one fierce desire: he wanted once again to kneel before the blessed rose-bush before he died. He felt that his end was nearer than the others knew His wish would not be granted for the asking: they would fear to overtire him.

So Brother Augustine disobeyed for the first time since he had taken orders. While the others were at dinner, this feeble, wan, and ancient monk tottered from his couch, and, feeling his way along the stone walls, left his cell and slowly crept down the vacant vaulted hall

to the familiar airy cloister. Brother Augustine shuffled on as fast as he could till he came to the three steps leading to his beloved garden. He descended these with great care, his mind and eyes and hands wholly absorbed in the effort.

A moment later he was in the pathway facing the blessed bush, and there his ecstatic gaze apparently beheld no less a vision than the Holy Mother herself, in peace and beauty glancing heavenward.

"Blessed Mary, have mercy!" he cried, falling to his knees in prayer.

At the sound of his voice Joline looked down, and the next moment saw the old monk fall in a faint.

Quickly she called Granville, who, rushing to the prostrate man, made sure he was breathing. Then Joline, ever practical, proposed immediate flight. The sound of a distant bell and approaching voices prompted Granville to follow her advice. In a trice she had disposed of the Madonna costume,

rolled up her hair under the boyish cap, grabbed her coat, and they were off.

As for Brother Augustine, his fellow-monks found him still unconscious. He was carried to his cot and tenderly watched over. Late that night the gentle patriarch breathed his last, but not before he had sufficiently recovered to tell them of his vision in the garden. There was glory in the old monk's face, and Heaven in his voice, as he told of the radiant Mary appearing to him among the branches of the holy bush. "It will flower this spring—mark well my words, the sacred bush will blossom."

Thus spoke Brother Augustine with his final breath, and the death-dew on his brow.

Of course, Joline — gay, rippling, giddy, *sans gêne* Joline—was unaware that the frail old monk was dying. She was very keenly aware, however, that he had knelt at her feet and fancied

her the real Madonna; and great was the merriment she derived therefrom. During the drive to the hotel, and all that evening, it was the recurrent theme of her talk.

"And you said I couldn't look like a Madonna! When you find another model for the Holy Mother who looks so genuine she is mistaken for the lady herself, I'll resign my position—*et voilà tout!* 'Blessed Mary'—that's what he called me!"

"Joline, do hush your irreverence," grumbled Granville. But a young Delilah direct from the Place de l'Opera is not easily awakened to reverence.

"It's you who lack reverence," she answered gaily, tossing a bread-crumb his way: they were seated at a tiny table in front of the hotel. "Why don't you reverence that old monk's testimony? If a father of the Church, nigh a hundred years old, doesn't know what the Madonna looks like, who does?"

Granville lingered on in Hildesheim

for a couple of months, painting furiously all the time at his great picture.

In June something not stated in the rules again happened in the monastery: *the old monk's prophecy came true!* The rose-bush bloomed anew after a dozen barren years. This wonder was promptly coupled with the old man's vision of the Virgin, and the tale was quickly spread. Crowds stood agape all day in the square, praying, marveling, discussing, and soon so loud was the acclaim, and so intent the desire, that ancient rules were relaxed: the monastery gates were opened wide to women as well as men who came to worship the miraculous bush wherein had stood Mary the Virgin-Mother, Queen of Heaven.

The news was not slow in reaching Granville and Joline, and great was the hilarity it occasioned. For two days Joline laughed and jested and hugged herself over the "mistaken miracle." Was ever before such a huge joke perpetrated by an unwitting little hard-worked model

on a company of walled-up mumbling monks!

But, unfortunately, the "joke" was walled-up as well as the monks: no one but Granville knew of it. In Joline's eyes this sadly marred its brilliancy. An impish desire possest her to tell of the part she had played. She finally succeeded in cloaking this impulse with a semblance of virtue: she assured herself that it was not right to allow the monastery to "foster such a falsehood." She believed it her duty, so she told Granville, to make full confession to the Church, or the prior, or the Pope, or whomever would hear her. Granville saw no merit in this project. They had some heated words over the matter, words not exactly torrid in temperature, but considerably more than tepid.

They changed Joline's plan not a whit. She dressed herself *à la penitente,* slammed the door, and went out. She hailed a fiacre, fluttered into it, and

The peace of the place seemed reflected in her face.

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also banged its door, so that Granville should hear through the open window. Then she rejoiced in the noise her vehicle made clattering down the street.

She was soon in front of the massive cathedral adjoining the monastery. Entering the sanctuary, she informed the wheezy, whispering priest who acted as door-keeper that she wished to make confession to the prior himself. She was told in breathy tones that this dignitary never heard confessions from outsiders.

After some more questions gaspingly answered, she induced the panting priest by means of a large donation to convey a message to the prior. He was to be told that the confession she wished to make concerned the sacred rose-bush, and was of so startling a nature that she believed even His Holiness at Rome would not deem it unworthy his attention.

Joline, you see, was still in her high and mighty mood.

The old priest was gone a long time. She sat in a pew and waited. Her thoughts wandered far and near as she sat there, immobile—just waiting.

It was many years since Joline had been in sight of a high altar and the sacred candles. Whenever she had heretofore visited a church, it had been on some high-festival day, when great crowds disturbed the sense of peace. To-day she was almost alone in the hallowed dimness of the place—huge and somnolent with incense and with mystic colors from the towering windows.

Joline sat still and waited.

There was a picture over the altar; there were candles below it and a crown above. It was a picture of the Virgin Mary. Joline wondered how Granville's picture would look over an altar; she had never before associated it with any place but a museum. She wondered who had posed for the figure in this old painting—so high enshrined and placed for worship.

How her thoughts kept wandering as she sat there quite still and waited!

An old woman came in from the vestibule, shuffled along the aisle, crossed herself as she faced the altar, and then knelt in prayer. Occasionally a little bell sounded in the distance. Nothing else could be heard as Joline sat there perfectly still and waited.

Joline looked again at the Madonna above the candles. Wouldn't it be strange, she thought, if years from now she, too, in a golden frame, should adorn an altar-niche, where kneeling supplicants would behold her, and bowing priests would wave incense before her, while she looked down from above, serenely posing as the Mother of God.

A kind of chill passed over Joline. Her eyes remained fixed on the altar as she sat there so still and waited.

Something akin to awe crept upon her. Joline suddenly realized that if her painted self should ever be raised to that holy place the mockery of it would

stab to her heart, though she lay ten feet in her grave.

While still strangely moved by this thought, a hand touched her shoulder. The soft-stepping priest of the door motioned her to follow him. The prior had consented to see her.

She was led as in a dream 'neath solemn arches, through echoing corridors, past praying monks, barefooted and austere, adown stone steps, beyond grilled gates—years and years away, it seemed, from the noisy world of the senses; the world of song and wine and jest that she had always known. Sunshine streamed through the columned cloister, but it seemed no longer the sunshine of earth, but rather the effulgent light of some other sphere.

A heavy door in the deep stone wall was unbarred, and she was ushered into the entrance-hall of the monastery.

Although the main door was so forbidding, other doors of this low stone chamber were open, and so were the

An impish desire possest her to tell of the part she had played.

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leaded windows, showing a glimpse of the garden. Beside a tall reading-desk whereon lay a huge open book stood a gray-bearded monk clad in a brown habit tied with a rope.

The guide left Joline and closed the door behind him.

The old man now turned toward her; never in her life had she seen such all-wise, kindly eyes; never had a face so thrilled her with its look of benign goodwill and peace.

"What is it you would tell me, daughter?"

"Daughter!" No one had ever before called her that; she had no memory of her parents. "Daughter!" Joline did not move or speak.

"Is your sin so great you cannot give it words?"

"Yes," came forth from Joline's lips, tho she had no conscious intention of saying this word. Until the present moment she had never dreamed of calling her light transgression of the mon-

astery rules a sin. But neither had she dreamed that her own voice could sound so strange and unreal as it did in this reverberating room. Another person seemed to be speaking for her.

The old man motioned her to a stool; he still remained standing.

"What sin can you have to relate in connection with our sacred rose-tree?" He crossed himself at mention of the bush. Joline had not before realized the full awe and reverence in which that bush was held. But she suddenly braced herself to carry out her purpose, tho her own voice still frightened her.

"It concerns the vision of Brother Augustine. He did not see the Holy Madonna. It was I who stood among the branches."

The only sign of agitation the good prior betrayed was an impulsive grasping of the cross that hung at his side.

"Tell me all," he commanded quietly.

She told the facts in full, but with none of the relish she had thought she

would derive from making this revelation. It was all very solemn and rather painful.

When she had finished, the old priest turned slowly about, with bowed head and still holding the cross.

"I must consider this in solitude and prayer. Stay here. I will return in half an hour," he said, and softly left the room.

While he was gone she pictured to herself the old monk alone and praying; talking with God, as he believed; consulting with the Almighty—about her! She remembered a time—eons ago it seemed—when this thought would have amused her; she would have joked about it and parted her reddened lips in a ribald laugh. But no—she corrected herself—never even in her maddest mood could she have laughed at thought of this kind old priest, had she once seen his gentle glance and heard his tender tones. There was a power in his serenity that must make even the most

jocose *fille de joie* give pause and wonder if there might not indeed come divine response to the prayer of such a man. And so Joline wondered now.

She had not long to wait. Softly and promptly he appeared at the door. He looked at her thoughtfully for a moment, his wondrous old eyes all-embracing in their kindness. He still held the crucifix clasped with both hands on his breast.

Joline had arisen as he entered, and bowed her head. This much of reverence came over her, and well might she bow to the words now uttered by this inspired man. Slowly and gently he addressed her:

"My child, I do not charge you with grave sin for breaking into the garden; you were thoughtless, and knew not its sanctity. Nor do I think a falsehood has been fostered by our claim of a miracle taking place."

He paused a moment, then continued: "Our blessed Brother Augustine had a

A heavy door in the deep stone wall was unbarred and she was ushered into the entrance hall of the monastery.

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vision of the Virgin in our holy bush. You were standing there, it is true, but his dying eyes may have seen something more than we know of. I would not say this to all the world—it might be misunderstood—but I truly believe there are chosen times when the spirit of the Holy Mother herself looks forth through the eyes of some good woman."

Joline gave a gasp and staggered a step back, as though struck. Her breast heaved from tremendous emotion as she leaned against the wall for support.

The old monk appeared not to notice her agitation, but continued with his quiet words:

"May God forgive me if I am speaking wrong, but I feel it to be true that in some mysterious way, for one brief moment, the spirit of the Holy Mother shone through your eyes as you stood there among the branches of the rose-tree she has blessed. Else why, do you suppose, did it bloom this year? Surely naught but the warmth of her beloved

presence could have given it new life. Her touch has revived it. Come with me, child: I will show you the proof of her visitation."

He turned and led the way through the open door into the brooding cloister that rimmed the garden. Joline, inwardly troubled and torn with unfamiliar fears and wonderment, followed silently.

"There is only one rose open now. We did have three, but—you shall see."

The gracious guide descended the worn steps, emerging into the little enclosure of graves and roses.

Joline glanced toward the bush and glimpsed its one white flower. An amazed cry escaped her. She rushed nearer, and looked again. *That rose was against the wall on the branch by the broken plaster, exactly where her hand had touched!*

"Blessed Mary, have mercy!" These words, the identical ones Brother Augustine had uttered, now fell from her

own lips, and a moment later there was a woman on her knees in that garden: a Magdalene in tears.

"But, kind Father," she sobbed, "you don't understand: I am—I am—not a good woman. I—am a sinner."

Was the good priest shocked or disturbed? Not at all: he seemed in no wise surprised, but answered in the same even, gentle voice:

"We are all sinners, my good daughter" (still he called her "good"; renewed tears from her weeping eyes moistened his hand which she clasped as he extended it toward her in benediction), "but however sinful you may have been, I know right well that for one bright moment, at least, you were good and pure of heart. When you stood 'neath the branches of that sacred tree, your thoughts were crystal-clear and purged of every evil purpose. Is this not true? Recall your thoughts when you stood there: were they not all glad and innocent?"

Slowly Joline raised her eyes in humble acquiescence. She remembered well that sunny hour, her quiet thoughts, and her simple joy in the bird that sang near her hand. A smile of holy gratitude illumined her face amid her tears; a joy deeper than any she had ever known swept over her because she knew, and this priest knew, of one pure hour in her life.

"And in that high moment our blessed Brother Augustine—God rest his soul! —here lies his grave—" he paused to indicate the uncovered mound—"in that high moment of your life, he saw the Madonna's glory in your eyes. The bush has blossomed just as he said. There can be no doubt, you see, that a miracle has occurred."

Truly he spoke, this wise old man, and well he knew the import of his words; a miracle had indeed occurred.

"As for your sins, my child, I have learned from our Redeemer Himself

There was a woman on her knees in that garden—a Magdalene in tears.

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the message to be given you. His words are, 'Go, and sin no more.' "

He silently held his hand over her bowed head, then turned to leave the garden. She followed him to the barred oak door, which he slowly opened. As she passed him, with contrite, broken mien, his final words rang out to sing in her soul forever:

"I have no fear for you, my daughter. The Madonna has chosen you for her own. She will bide with you always."

A moment later Joline found herself outside the cathedral: a new woman—in a new world.

The Cathedral-Platz looked different to Joline; she had seen it nearly every day for three months, but now it seemed like the open page of a great book. She read enthralling meanings in every corner of its medieval architecture. A woman was drawing water at the old worn well; she was picturesque in her stiff white cap and red woolen bodice,

but to Joline her work was far more beautiful than her looks: she was doing useful work, drawing water to quench the thirsty, to cook her good man's meal, to scrub her floor, and to wash her linen. She was a good woman, such as the Madonna must love.

A boy shuffled by in sabots, carrying a bag of oats on his back: he too was good, because he was a participant in the world's work, a tiny cog in the great social system that keeps the world fed.

Joline suddenly perceived the manifold work all about her: in the old, old houses of this ancient town she saw and reverenced the work well done of laborers long dead. The bell in the dreamy tower above her rang out: it rang true —good work well done long ago by some maker of bells. To Joline the whole world seemed abrim with good work and good people; only *she* was evil—and idle.

She was still standing by the door of the cathedral, facing the road to her

hotel, when she became mindful of the fact that her fiacre was waiting where she had left it an hour ago. She drew out her purse and paid the man: she did not wish to ride. Then she looked at her purse: it was of meshed gold, and contained gold coins. The thing grew hot in her hand; a flame engulfed her face; the wages of sin scorched her soul. She looked about her and a moment later dropped the purse into the poor-box.

Then she started walking slowly, thoughtfully—away from the hotel.

Part Two

THE SEQUEL

Part II

THE SEQUEL

JOLINE had not a plan in her head, nor a penny in her pocket, but in her heart was a memory recent and vivid, the priest's words—"Go, and sin no more."

She walked on and soon was nearing the suburbs; the houses dwindled in importance and frequency until she was frankly in the country among the low, red-tiled cottages of the Hanoverian peasantry.

She sat down on an overturned cart by the roadside. She was astonished at herself for being so untroubled; to find, in fact, that she was enjoying this escapade. Ah!—that was the reason! She knew there was a mocking, unregenerate spirit somewhere in the recesses of

her being that regarded the entire proceeding as an "escapade."

"You will 'sin no more' just so long as the sun shines bright, and you are not hungry."

She suddenly clenched her hands:

"I *will* go on." She said it aloud so vehemently that a complacement hen near by scurried across the road with stretched neck and a flurry of dust.

She walked on, always in the same direction. She met a ruddy woman wheeling a cartful of turnips; her broad smile and hearty nod warmed Joline's very soul. She felt herself worthy of the honest woman's greeting and glowed with a sudden pride. She only wished she herself were pushing a load of turnips. She felt she would like the sensation of using her muscles — pushing, lifting or pulling to some good purpose.

Ere long she saw a woman in a door-yard washing clothes. A small child was playing on the ground near by.

Joline stood at the fence, watching longingly. Something on the kitchen stove boiled over. The woman rushed in. Then the child hurt itself and the woman rushed out—mothering, scolding, hurrying.

Joline stepped through the gate and addressed the woman, timidly.

"If I do the washing, will you give me some bread?"

The woman looked at Joline quizzically; thought her a most peculiar beggar, but after some further parleying, consented to the bargain.

"Come on; if you'll rub them clean."

Joline rushed in, pinned up her dress, rolled up her sleeves and doused her hands in the suds with all the joy of a boy going swimming. The woman, holding the child in her arms, watched Joline from the doorway, suspicious and puzzled, but soon convinced that this quixotic vagrant was fully bent on bringing light to dark places in that tubful of linen. Joline felt in her arms the

strength of one who goes forth to battle. To wring all the blackness from a stout, reprobate shirt, to shake it white in the sunshine, was like making a conquest of evil. She was washing the sins from her own soul.

Little did the broad-hipped housewife within—who every few minutes peered curiously through the window at this energetic, stray laundress — little did she dream that she was witnessing a soul's regeneration; that the beads of perspiration decking that white brow were holy as any baptismal drops bestowed by the hands of a priest.

When the work was done and Joline sat down on a bench to rest, the woman came out smiling and jabbering the provincial dialect faster than Joline could understand. But she understood the smile and also the huge slice of rye bread which the woman handed her, together with a generous mugful of home-made wine.

"Here!" she exclaimed. "You earned

something more than the bread. Take this and be refreshed."

The woman suddenly turned and disappeared, summoned by sounds from within: a tumble and a cry.

So Joline, alone, partook of the first meal of her life she had honestly earned. She ate slowly of the bread and sipped the wine. It became to her as a solemn rite, her first communion; the bread and wine of honest labor and an upright life. There, in the sunshine, in homely proximity to a washtub, a basin, a clucking hen and a potato-patch, that bread and wine were received by Joline as tho coming to her direct from the priest of the sacred Rose-bush.

When she had finished she thanked the good woman and started on her way, always in the same direction.

She felt rested now, athrill with the wonder of life and always exalted by the memory of the Madonna mystery.

Not a thought of fear came over Joline even now in the growing twi-

light, alone on the highroad with no destination, no bed awaiting her and no coin to buy one. She simply went on till weariness made her pause, at just the right spot it seemed. An open stable door enticed her; she looked in; a great straw pile was all she could discern. It was all she needed. Such blessed fatigue possessed her that, throwing herself down, she barely became conscious of the happy thought of another stable where once the Madonna rested, when she fell asleep, trusting and contented.

It was daylight when Joline awoke. She might not have opened her eyes even then had not the sound of voices aroused her. She found herself facing an audience, an astonished family of father, mother, aunt and two children, eying her in wonder. The father had discovered her first, then summoned his wife. Curiosity brought the aunt, disobedience the older boy who had been told to stay in the house, and hunger

the younger one (in his mother's arms). Joline, with cheeks unrouged and hair unwaved, was still good to look upon, flushed from sleep and at peace with the world. She sat up promptly, smiling confidently at the sabotted, homespun group.

"Why are you here?" the man asked, not unkindly.

"The door was open and I was tired. I had walked from Hildesheim — and had done a big washing besides."

She felt proud as a white peacock when adding this last phrase. Before their slow-going minds could interrupt her, she added:

"I'll wash for you too, if you will let me, to pay for my night's bed, some bread and a cup of coffee."

She spoke with a glow of assurance, as one who had learned a trade. She did not ask timidly as she had done the day before; she was now a washerwoman of some experience.

"But where are you going? And why

are you alone?" questioned the wife suspiciously.

"I had a—place in Hildesheim—but I left it." Joline was astonished at her own glibness, but still more was she astonished at the plan for the future, all completed and mapped out, which she suddenly found in her mind's storeroom.

"I am going home."

"Where is your home?"

"In Brumath, Alsace." (She was born there and had been raised in a foundling school.)

"Alsace!—that is far away! How will you get there?"

"Walk and work." Joline stood up now, shaking the straw from her dress.

"You will have to cross the mountains." The sandy-bearded farmer said this with the voice of wisdom; he was glad to have his wife and sister hear that he knew things like this.

Joline smiled, thereby winning all

hearts save that of the slant-eyed sister.

"I shan't worry about them till I get there. I'm more worried now about something to eat." She turned toward the forbidding spinster:

"May I wash for you, or scrub a floor to earn my morning meal?"

"Well — I suppose so," the flat-breasted one acceded, grudgingly.

The women filed out of the stable to the house.

The humble little home looked so immaculate that Joline despaired of there being any work for her to do. But this only proved her inexperience. It soon developed that five copper pans pendant on the wall were disgracefully lack-luster and must be polished. There were also a couple of flyspecks on one of the windows, and the hearthstone had not been scrubbed since the evening before. Joline was put to these tasks. She was whole-hearted in her work, but wofully awkward: the good wife little wondered that she had to leave her last

place. But a tolerable breakfast was earned and given her.

When this was over Joline made ready to go, but at the door she turned back—hesitated—and then asked timidly if she might sit on the step and hold the baby—just a minute? A sudden longing had swept over her — a wild desire to hold that baby. He was a pudgy, ruddy, cuddling little chap, and Joline held him close for a moment, then looked up to the mother and made an astonishing confession:

"I have a baby of my own! He was just this age when I left him!"

This was all too true, poor girl. She had never before felt the enormity of the fact.

"You left him!" exclaimed the astonished mother. "Where?"

"In Alsace. I am going back to him now."

"And where's your man?"

Joline lowered her head: "I don't know. I have none."

An instant later the child was violently snatched from her arms, and a raucous voice hurled maledictions upon her; it was the angular, close-mouthed aunt who thus broke in upon the situation.

"A pretty piece you are, trailing alone around the country, walking into honest women's houses pretending you want work! Just you hustle out of here! No room for such as you in this region! You're a good-for-nothing baggage!—and that's what you are!"

Joline, with flushed face and tears in her eyes, was at first impelled to fly away from the tirade and hide her disgraced head; but suddenly she recalled the priest's gentle message; he also knew her sins! She waited till the panting woman on the doorstep was out of breath and then answered quietly:

"I have sinned, but God knows and the Holy Virgin knows I have repented. That's why I am walking now to Alsace."

She turned away from the women, and walked sorrowfully around the house, down the path to the gate, which she opened slowly. Suddenly there was a rush of quick footsteps behind her, and a voice:

"Wait a moment."

She turned and saw the mother holding out her child for a final embrace, and an apple she had hastily grabbed as a peace-offering. Joline kissed the child—and then broke down with sobs of purest gratitude. She thanked the woman with looks more than words, and then suddenly found herself in the woman's arms, embraced with all the warmth and pity of a life-long friend. The whole world's wealth could not have comforted Joline and strengthened her as did that humble farm-wife's impulsive embrace.

"You do believe me—don't you?" she pleaded again and again. "I am going to be a good woman. I am going to my baby; I am going to work for him

and pray for him and live for him and make him a good boy. You do believe me—don't you?"

"Yes—yes—of course, and God bless you," was the hearty reply.

With broken words of thanks, Joline at last tore herself away, looking back many times to wave her hand to the mother and child leaning on the gate.

And as she looked, Joline swayed under the might of a sudden thought; perhaps she, too, like Father Augustine, was beholding a vision of the Madonna! It was easy enough to believe that the spirit of the Holy Mother was shining through the eyes of that blessed peasant-woman with her baby leaning upon the gate in an immensity of unconscious heart-goodness that verily amounted to sainthood.

The world was all gold to Joline as she wandered on that day.

On she went, always onward, toward Alsace, only pausing when she found work for a week or more.

She grew fearless of the road and of solitude. Most of all she loved the highway when the friendly stars appeared. She learned to look for them and know them, till at last she joyed in the fancy that she was following one of them—her Star of the East—that was leading her on and on to where a babe, her very own, was lying in a crib. Strange—she had never before felt the mother-yearning so strong within her. She had thought her duty done in sending a regular remittance to the sturdy foster-mother with whom the child had been left.

But now her whole being reached out to the one creature in all the world that was her very own. She had a purpose in life now; someone to work for and to love. She and the boy would be a little community in themselves—a family—such as she saw on every side of her. She would work and work until she owned a little cottage all their own; then she could stand at the doorway,

For love of him and for love of God, Joline, as the seasons went by, worked from morn till night and by candle-light to earn an honest living. *See page 65*

evenings, with the boy at her side when work was done, and nod a hearty "good day" to the stray wanderer passing by, as happy housewives now did to her. And she would tell the boy of the Madonna, and teach him the joy of honest labor and a pure heart.

Thus she dreamed as she walked, and dreams long dwelt on amount to prayers, and prayers wrought in faith come true.

Joline reached her home-town, and found her boy. He was taller by a foot or more than she had pictured him, but oh the joy of claiming him and winning his love.

For love of him and for love of God, Joline, as the seasons went by, worked from morn till night and by candle-light to earn an honest living. She worked in fields, and she worked in factories. She washed and scrubbed and churned. She hoed and sowed, pulled weeds and picked berries. She stitched miles of seams in close tailor shops. She pulled

plows in harness with cattle. Hitched up with a dog, she carted vegetables to town. She nursed the sick and minded babies. She crocheted shawls and mittens, and knitted stockings by the gross. She chopped wood and piled it up. She boiled soft soap in great iron kettles out of doors. She whitewashed fences. She tended coke-ovens through the night. She raised pigs and helped to butcher them. She raised flowers too, when she could—white roses, nothing else; and whenever they bloomed and she handled them, Joline thanked God that her eyes had seen and her hands had touched the Rose-Bush of a Thousand Years.

And this was what she was doing once when a strolling artist saw her, watched her for a moment and then, unstrapping his sketch-box, called from the roadway:

"Please stay as you are, my good woman. I'll pay you five marks for the pose."

Joline looked up at him startled; she swayed for a moment well-nigh over-

come by old memories. Her lips moved to frame an answer, but suddenly they closed, as tho forever.

She made no reply, but plainly understood his offer, and acquiesced most satisfactorily to the artist. She looked steadfastly at her rose-bush, and was soon again, in thought and memory, on her knees in the monastery garden.

This artist had strange ideas. Some of his friends called him a pupil of Wiertz. He painted the eccentric. According to his friends you never could tell what he would attempt next, but you could wager your handkerchief at a funeral that it would not be what you, or I, or the gendarme on the corner, would call beautiful.

He saw something now in Joline's face that appealed to him. It was no longer a pretty face, nor a very young face, but there was—a something.—As he saw her tenderly regarding that rose-bush, an idea occurred to him.

He showed his sketch that evening

to a brother artist; they were doing Alsace and stopping at the Brumath Inn.

"What will you call it?" he was asked as they studied the worn, meditative figure on the canvas.

"The Madonna of the Rose-bush," was the quiet reply.

The younger man gave an exclamation of impatience.

"Who ever heard of a Madonna as old as that?"

"And who ever heard that she died young?" retorted the painter. "It is high time she was painted as she appeared in her mature years, crowned with sorrow. You notice here that she is not looking at the roses, but at the thorns. I believe the mother of Christ, after the Crucifixion, saw nothing else when she looked at a rose-tree — saw and felt only the pain of the thorns on His brow."

He kept Joline posing for several days until the picture was well advanced.

He little dreamed that she had once been a professional model, posing for Bacchantes and a whole troupe of pagan deities: nor did it once dawn on her that she was now posing again for a Madonna. She doubtless would have crossed herself and humbly refused the honor, had she been told.

The unknown painter soon packed up his palette and canvas and returned to Paris where he finished his picture in a whirl of enthusiastic determination.

Three months later he had the joy and triumph of seeing his Madonna of the Rose-bush acclaimed in the Salon as a masterpiece.

Then it was that it occurred to him to astonish the humble original of the picture with an invitation to come to Paris and see herself as others saw her. This idea appealed to his eccentric sense of humor; it also struck the fancy of several of his friends, among whom was one by the name of Granville, who offered to contribute toward the "Ma-

donna's" traveling expenses. So a carefully worded letter was mailed to "Julie Hofer" (Joline had long since dropped her Boulevard name).

A week later came a reply from the "Madonna." Amid high hilarity, much tobacco-smoke and a round of unholy jests, the missive was torn open and read aloud.

"CHER MONSIEUR:

"With much pleasure I learn of the success of your picture, and with much gratitude I receive your kind invitation. A journey in my life would be a great event and a great joy. But if it is not overbold and rude, may I beg to say that my one desire is to visit, not Paris, but the town of Hildesheim, that I may kneel once again before the Rose-bush of a Thousand Years. I remain, Monsieur, your humble servant, who will thank you, Monsieur, with a thousand prayers, if you find it in your power to grant this one great wish of

JULIE HOFER."

However much Joline had been astonished to receive the invitation, it was as nothing to the astonishment now aroused by her answer. Such an amazing letter from a peasant!—and such a strange request!

One in that group held the letter open in his hand a full half-hour without speaking. He was studying the handwriting—and thinking, thinking of Hildesheim; of his stay there, years ago; of the Rose-bush and the picture he had painted (a flat failure) and of Joline; that will-o'-the-wisp, who so unceremoniously had left him—with another man as he supposed. He looked again at the letter; the sentiment it expressed. Something about it made him handle the paper tenderly. He asked permission to keep it a day or two.

The next morning Granville went to the Salon and studied long a certain picture showing the face of a tired, thoughtful peasant woman. Could it be—? But of course, such a thing was

impossible—Joline and this—? No—it was altogether absurd, but still curiosity got the better of him.

Granville went himself to Brumath to "escort the Madonna to Hildesheim," as he jocosely told the little group who had read the letter; he said he was in need of those "thousand prayers" she had promised.

It was merely the impulse of an adventurer—of a seeker of quixotic experience—that impelled Granville to investigate this mysterious "Julie Hofer."

If it were really Joline — well — it would be an interesting dénouement to the play—that's all. To find how ill she had fared since leaving him—there would be a bit of satisfaction in that. He would play the Grand Homme, take her to Hildesheim, give her some money and feel himself quite a saint.

His first sight of Joline was a shock. She was scrubbing the floor of her humble cottage. The door was open and she did not see him. He watched for

some moments and at last spoke the name — "Joline," tho he was not yet sure. She looked up, plainly startled.

No doubt now of her identity. She recognized him. But she evinced neither joy nor dismay. He spoke quietly:

"I am sorry for you, Joline; I wish to help you."

Joline now stood up, set aside the scrubbing pail, readjusted her clean apron and replied with even tones:

"There is no need of pity, and no need of help. I am poor in one way, but very rich in another. I have that which money can not buy."

"And what is that?" he asked, still standing outside; she had not invited him in.

She looked full upon him now, with deep, untroubled eyes.

"A good conscience." She spoke the words very solemnly.

Granville hardly knew how to take this. It was a rather bewildering dénouement.

"Is this why you wish to visit the Rose-bush of Hildesheim? I have come to take you there."

Joline's tense repose was gone in an instant. Her delight at this news was to Granville the most astonishing phase of their meeting.

The sight of him after many years had aroused no animation, but the mere thought of the sacred rose-bush had called forth much of the old time charm and vivacity he so well remembered. She invited him in, hastened to make tea, plied him with questions about the trip. When would they leave? How long would it take? And did he suppose the same old prior would be there? And did he know whether the bush had bloomed since that year?

They started the next day, and throughout the journey a growing ecstasy illumined her face as every hour drew her nearer to the scene of her holiest memories. She told Granville all her wondrous experience, her sud-

den awakening to repentance and the inspired words of the old Prior.

"And you have never faltered?" asked Granville, amazed.

"Never."

"And you are happy?"

She answered very seriously:

"Yes."

Granville was silenced into thoughtfulness.

They reached Hildesheim and lost no time in seeking the monastery garden and above all the ancient Prior. Was he still alive? Would he see her? Would he remember her? Joline was trembling with eagerness and entreaty. She must see him. He surely could not refuse her. Twice she sent her message explaining who she was and at last he came forth, more feeble than when last she saw him, but still possest of those wondrous, all-seeing, all-forgiving eyes.

Joline fell on her knees as he approached, and there, under God's clear sky, before the sacred rose-bush, she told

the story of her life since that hour when the priest had blessed her. With tears in her eyes she told it, and held up to him her work-worn hands.

"Look at them, Father: they were white and soft when last you saw them."

He touched them gently.

"Hands worn and torn by labor are hallowed by their resemblance to the wounded hands of the Crucified One. To me they are beautiful."

Granville, standing aside in the shadows of the pillared cloister, a witness to this scene of a soul's unveiling, wiped tears from his eyes, and soon found himself shaken by emotion so overpowering that he leaned against the wall and buried his face in his arms, his shoulders heaving with great sobs.

When the priest had given his blessing and gone, Granville rushed forward and grasped Joline's roughened hand. He pressed it reverently to his lips.

"Joline, I need you."

He ejaculated the words brokenly.

"Teach me to be good, to be worthy of that old priest's blessing. I want your hand to lead me."

Again sobs overcame him; he kneeled at her feet, hiding his tears in the folds of her faded gown. She comforted him as a mother might, and caressed his bowed head as one would a tired child.

He arose strangely strengthened.

They walked away from the Cathedral in a mood of tranquil peace, hand in hand like two children.

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